



Mobile "pig tractor" is fitted with tow hooks on front and back, allowing a car or truck to pull it to fresh ground.



A 55-gal. plastic water barrel is mounted on top of enclosure. A hose runs from barrel to a pair of automatic watering nipples mounted on side of enclosure.

"Tractors" Make Raising Pastured Pigs Easy

By Klaire Bruce

Ask Jim Criger of Springfield, Mo., why he invented his pig tractors and he'll tell you, "My pigs got out and I couldn't catch them. It's miserable to chase pigs."

His sturdy, mobile 8 by 16-ft. enclosures were modeled after chicken tractors. "I just made 'em bigger and stronger," says Criger.

The sides of each 4-ft. high pen are made from 1/8-in. thick angle iron fitted with cattle panels. The sides are welded onto a bottom frame made up of 6-in. wide flange beams on the front and back, and skids made from 2 by 2 angle iron with a notch cut in the end and bent up to a 45 degree angle for ease of pulling.

The front of each pen has a full door that opens out with a built-in half door that opens downward.

The back of the tractor is a large sheet of treated plywood attached to the frame.

Another sheet of treated plywood goes on top of the back half of the tractor, providing shelter for the pigs. The remaining space is left open to provide fresh air and sunlight.

A 55-gal. plastic water barrel sits on its side in a 16-in. gap in the top plywood sheet – a length of 1/2-in. garden hose runs from the barrel to a pair of automatic watering nipples mounted to the side of the wire panels. One nipple is set at mature pig height, while the second is mounted lower for the piglets to reach.

The beam at the front of the tractor is 2 in. deep and doubles as a feed trough. A tow hook is mounted on both the front and back beams, allowing the tractors to be hooked to

a car or truck via a tow strap and pulled to fresh ground.

Assembly of the pig pens is fairly straightforward: Criger lays the pattern out on the floor of his barn, cuts the material to the correct lengths and welds it all together. He currently has ten Red Wattle pigs in pig tractors on his farm. Whenever the pigs need fresh forage, Criger simply hooks the tractors up to his car and pulls them to a new location. He sells his pig tractor with prices starting at \$899.

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Low-Cost Leaf "Picker Upper"

"It cost very little to build, and I never have to rake any more," says William Yewell, Ogden, Iowa, about the "leaf picker upper" he built to pick up leaves and grass from his farm yard. It simply drags on the ground and requires no outside power.

Yewell bought a 6-ft. long piece of poly at FarmTek and rolled it into a 2-ft. dia. tube, using rivets to hold it together. He bolted the tube to the discharge chute on his Murray 40-in. riding mower and installed a hinged plywood door with screen on back of the tube.

"The mower mulches the leaves and grass and blows them into the tube. It only takes 10 min. to fill," says Yewell. "It fills up so fast that I had to put another screen on top of the tube to keep it from plugging up and blowing everything back toward the front. To empty out the material I open the rear door and use



Yewell's 2-ft. dia. poly tube bolts to riding mower's discharge chute and drags on the ground. Mower blows leaves and grass into tube.

a rake to pull the material out."

The tube is bolted to the deck with two 1/4-in. bolts and also secured by a bungee strap to a handle on the riding mower that's

used to adjust the mower height.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, William Yewell, 1721 K Ave., Ogden, Iowa 50212 (ph 515 275-2252).

"Birdy Booties" Help Keep Chicken Feet Healthy

The Birdy Bootie is the latest product for chickens developed by Tobi Kosanke. Her Hen Saver® hen aprons protect the backs of chickens and were featured in FARM SHOW'S Vol. 33, No. 1.

The Bird Bootie is designed to help heal chickens' injured feet.

"We had problems with bumblefoot in our flock, and I found out it was a common problem that has a 50 percent mortality rate," Kosanke says.

Bumblefoot refers to the infection chickens get after some type of foot injury. Injuries occur when large chickens get splinters or their feet get scratched or scraped. If a staph infection sets in, it can spread to the bones and kill the bird.

Ordinary first aid wraps won't stay on so, Kosanke designed right and left booties out of waterproof neoprene. Because heat dissipates through chicken's feet she left the toes open to provide air circulation. The booties are secured with strong Velcro around the foot and ankle, and the chicken can do what it does naturally – scratch in the dirt and flex



Birdy Booties are made out of waterproof neoprene. They're designed to help heal chickens' injured feet. The toes are left open to provide air circulation.

its feet to sit on the roost. The bottom piece of neoprene is textured to provide traction, while the top is smooth. In addition to a bandage, there's room inside for a cotton ball to provide an extra cushion for the foot.

Like Kosanke, who owns a farm for rescue animals, her customers are typically small backyard poultry owners who are attached to their flock and prefer to treat instead of cull their injured birds.

The patent-pending Birdy Bootie sells for

\$9.99 each (right or left) and can be washed and dried to use over and over again. They fit standard breeds. Bantam-sized booties are available by special order.

Kosanke is working on booties for larger birds such as ducks, geese and raptors.

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